

From: Cynthia Metzger/ESC/R3/USEPA/US
Sent: 12/5/2011 2:38:57 PM
To: Terry Simpson/ESC/R3/USEPA/US@EPA
CC:
Subject: Data review?

Terry - is there a way to find out who at EPA reviewed this data and whether we can take a look at it, too? Or did we?

EPA: No threat to Dimock water

By David Falchek (Staff Writer)

Published: December 3, 2011

After a preliminary review of well water tests in the heavily drilled area of Dimock, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency told residents their water poses "no immediate health threat."

The email sent to residents from Trish Taylor, community involvement coordinator for EPA Region 3, notes that the review is ongoing and pledged that the agency would continue to monitor the situation.

Read the email [HERE](#)

"While we are continuing our review, to date, the data does not indicate that the well water presents an immediate health threat to users," said the email. Ms. Taylor could not be reached for comment Friday.

While the EPA has no direct jurisdiction over Dimock water quality, residents invited the agency to review state and company water quality tests.

The EPA's email came two days after Cabot's state-ordered potable water deliveries stopped and the day after state Environmental Hearing Board Judge Bernard A. Labuskes Jr. denied residents an emergency hearing.

The EPA's comments were embraced by drilling advocates and Cabot Oil & Gas officials, but met with skepticism from residents convinced that drilling activity fouled their well water.

Cabot officials interpreted the EPA's email as confirmation of the company's test results - most of which is done through state-certified laboratories. "The EPA's findings are consistent with the results of thousands of water samples tested by Cabot over the last several years," the company said in a statement.

But some residents of the area made famous by flaming faucets object to the EPA's preliminary opinion. They say their water smells of natural gas or turpentine or is turbid and unusable.

Victoria Switzer, vocal skeptic of the gas industry, called the EPA statement "lunacy." But she didn't see it as a total setback, noting that the agency has yet to make a final determination. She notes the EPA did not do its own tests and she is hopeful the agency will continue to pay attention to the area.

An attorney for some residents asked Ms. Taylor to retract her statement. In a letter, Tate J. Kunke offered a list of substances found in Dimock water believed to have come from hydraulic fracturing fluid - substances rarely looked for in water testing.

"We do not feel it is wise for homeowners to potentially expose themselves to untested chemicals, even if a few that have been tested for appear to temporarily pass... standards," Mr. Kunke wrote. "Chronic, low level exposure to fracking chemicals is too great a medical risk to assume. Our clients are not lab rats."

Households in Dimock are looking for another source of water and plan to submit arguments before Judge Labuskes by Dec. 7.

Contact the writer: dfalchek@timeshamrock.com

Below is the email from EPA:

-----Original Message-----

From: Taylor.Trish <Taylor.Trish@epamail.epa.gov>

To:

Cc: Polish.David <Polish.David@epamail.epa.gov>

Sent: Fri, Dec 2, 2011 6:34 am

Subject: Follow-up status re: Nov 10, 2011 visit with Dimock PA residents

Dear Dimock Residents,

This email is a follow-up to the visits to Dimock area homes by EPA on November 10, 2011 and the subsequent review of well sampling data for wells impacted by the Cabot Oil and Gas Company drilling activities. EPA has conducted a preliminary review and screening of the data provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and residents. While we are continuing our review, to date, the data does not indicate that the well water presents an immediate health threat to users. EPA will continue to review available information related to the concerns of Dimock area residents. We are continuing to work with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania going forward on this issue.

Please feel free to call me or David Polish, Community Involvement Coordinator, at (215) 814-3327, if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Trish Taylor, Community Involvement Coordinator
Hazardous Site Cleanup Division (Mailcode 3HS52)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3
1650 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA., 19103
phone: (215) 814 - 5539
fax: (215) 814 - 3015

Cindy Metzger, Director
Office of Analytical Services & Quality Assurance
EPA Region III
701 Mapes Road
Ft. Meade, MD 20755-5350
410-305-2735 (voice)
410-305-3095 (fax)
metzger.cynthia@epa.gov